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ABSTRACT

This paper, the fifth of seven, part of an interdisciplinary project on the context of reading and reading research that explores similarities and dissimilarities in the response to literature in readers from different cultures, describes the methods used for the construction of a questionnaire for readers' social, educational, financial, and literary backgrounds. The paper discusses the 28 questions posed in the first international version of the questionnaire, which was made as comprehensive as possible. After explaining that the first version was then tested under field conditions, the paper relates that the subjects, 45 United States high school students in Teaneck, New Jersey and 57 Danish high school students in Copenhagen, were administered the questionnaire. The paper states that the results provided researchers with data to prepare the final version of the questionnaire to be used for the "Folktale Project." The questionnaire is appended. (MS)

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FOLKTALE:

A CROSS-CULTURAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF LITERATURE

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PAPER
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Title: THE CONSTRUCTION AND EXPERIMENTAL, CROSS-NATIONAL TESTING OF THE FIRST VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE READERS' BACKGROUNDS IN THE "FOLKTALE-PROJECT"

Author(s): Cay Dollerup, Iven Reventlow, Carsten Rosenberg Hansen

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A Work from The Research Unit for Experimental Studies in Reader Response.

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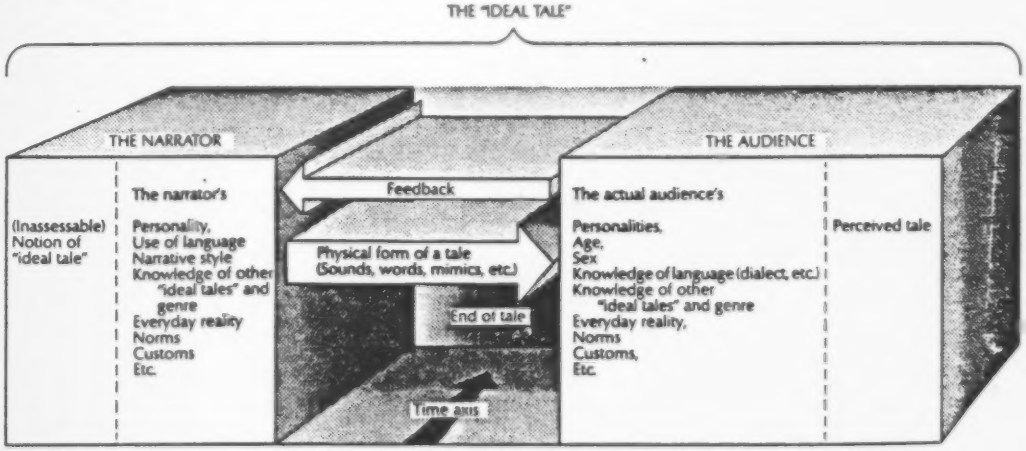

(The figure illustrates the narrative time: the narrative contract between narrator and audience and which is limited in time.)

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FOLKTALE: A CROSS-CULTURAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF LITERATURE.

PAPER 5

The Construction and Experimental, Cross-national Testing of the First Version of the Questionnaire on the Readers' Backgrounds in the "Folktale-Project".

Authors: Cay Dollerup, Iv[illegible] Reventlow, Carsten Rosenberg Hansen.

ABSTRACT:

The present paper from the "Folktale-Project" describes the methods used for the construction of the questionnaire on the readers' social, educational, financial, and literary backgrounds.

The construction was a kind of iterative process, involving a series of set-up of questions, of testing and checking, of re-phrasing and discussion of the individual questions.

The paper discusses the 28 questions posed in the first international version of the questionnaire which was made as comprehensive as possible.

This first version was tested out under field conditions with 45 US students at Teaneck Senior High, New Jersey, USA, and with 57 Danish students at two Copenhagen 'gymnasier'(High-schools/ lycee/Hochschule) in Denmark. And the paper discusses the changes made as a result of these first rounds of international testing.

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We are particularly indebted to Professors Pirini and Endakatchen of Teaneck High School and to Rektor Visti Jacobsen of Taarnby Gymnasium for permitting us to interview students at their respective schools. However our most heartful thanks are extended to the 102 Danish and American students who participated in the international test round and gave us the information we needed to go on with our work.

CD

The present paper is the fifth one from the Folktale project. In it we describe the background questionnaire in its first Danish and English version as well as a test for checking it for ambiguities and the like. 45 American and 57 Danish students aged 16-19 participated, and their answers were used for our analysis of the way the questions worked. The analysis led to changes which we thought appropriate for an improvement of the questionnaire.

I.0. BACKGROUND

"Folktale" is to explore similarities and dissimilarities in the response to literature in readers from different cultures.

In that context, it is useful to suggest that there are at least five different layers or strata in the literary experience, i.e. the response to literature.

These layers are determined by, and primarily connect with:

a. the texts as physical objects which are read by readers (and which do have a cultural imprint of their own (cf. Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 4)).

b. features which tie up with the individual reader's personality, education, and social background.

c. social, economic, political, and educational factors in the society in which the reader lives.

d. factors depending on culture and religion, i.e. features which are often common to two or more societies, and

e. cross-cultural, common human factors.

These layers overlap, and the stratification mainly serves to show the complexity of the issues, and to clarify our discussion.

The Folktale project aims at relating on as many parts of the readers' responses as possible to the above categories (or some approximations to them), in order better to chart the similarities in the literary experiences cross-culturally. Therefore we are interested in getting as much information from - and on - our readers as possible.

We shall get this information mostly by means of questionnaires, and the one discussed in the present paper

concerns the readers' backgrounds. It will be noted that the questionnaire is fairly comprehensive. Our reasons for aiming at comprehensiveness at this stage are as follows:

a. previous studies have shown that there is numerous background variables which significantly influence the nature of the individual reader's experience - and of course we wish to cover the ground as well as possible.

b. questions which have been tested out, can be cut out and suppressed for practical reasons at any stage in the project, but on the other hand, it is difficult to insert and to thoroughly check new questions at later stages in the development of a study.

c. we have planned an anonymous study, and must therefore aim at getting as much information as possible in the same process, as we shall never be able to return to individual readers and question them on particular issues.

Since 1968 we have constructed questionnaires for a number of studies: apart from the fact that we have used many questions from previous studies for the "Folktale" questionnaire, we have also come realise that fears that readers might be wary of giving too much information about themselves, are - by and large and with the inevitable exception - unfounded. On the contrary, the vast majority of readers find it interesting to fill in the questionnaires we present them with. One reason may be that in our studies it is eminenty obvious to the participants that their anonymity will be respected. But it also seems as if some readers just find it stimulating that somebody takes interest in their personal lives. However, we cannot be sure that this will be the same all over the world: we must stress that our experiences this far are limited to few countries (esp. Denmark and the US)

II.0 THE GENERAL PLAN AND PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE QUESTIONNAIRES

II.I THE QUESTIONNARIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE COVERAGE.

Paper 1 outlines our plans for collecting as much information

as possible in a near-identical or at least comparable way about the participants from different cultures and on the readers' responses. It decribes our intention to use questionnaires and the like.

The initial plans for the project foresaw sittings where:
1. readers would first answer some questions on their backgrounds;
2. the readers would then read the stories and answer questions on their responses to each of the three stories (2a, 2b, 2c).
And eventually
3. the readers would answer questions on their attitudes to specific phenomena which might affect the responses if posed at the beginning (cf. Paper 1:11-23).

In addition to the above-mentioned questionnaires filled in by readers, the plan called for "group descriptions" of fairly homogeneous groups of readers, e.g. one specific class of students in one country.

We are here concerned only with the questionnaire which the readers themselves fill in and which yields information on the readers' backgrounds, the way they perceive it i.e. the questionnaire numbered 1 above.

II.2 THE SCOPE OF THE BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE.

If we use a "group description" it is true that the background questionnaire may furnish us with "double information", e.g. if the age or social background is the same for all readers involved. In other cases, however, the present background questionnaire will be our only means of establishing anything about the reader's social, cultural, etc. background, and, thus the factors that determine aspects (components) of their responses. This means that the questionnaire must be:

a. comprehensive and pertinent in terms of content, and

b. unambiguously phrased in order to elicit comparable information from readers from different cultures.

We hope that the next round of international tests of the questionnaire will enable us to ensure that the questions are

clear (point b), and, also, that the number of questions may possibly be reduced by means of the following three criteria:

I. the questions' relevance for the readers' experiences of the stories in the study.

II. the amount of information which can - in terms of practicability - be introduced in the study, and

III. considerations about the appropriateness - or to put bluntly the offensiveness - of specific questions in some cultures.

II.3 THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

The general procedure in the making of the questionnaire was in keeping with the principles from our previous studies; it is a kind of iterative process, where phrasings of question are carefully checked with readers, and whenever necessary, re-phrased against new readers:

a. to identify and phrase questions which seemed pertinent.

b. to check with readers whether new questions should be added, and when the phrasing of the questions posed seemed unambiguous, then to translate the questions into English for use in the US.

d. to revise the Danish vs. the English questions.

e. to check out the questionnaires with a group of American readers and with a group of Danish readers. In this test the readers were asked to comment on the questions, and we checked on whether we got comparable information in the two countries.

f. to identify all the questions which for some reason or other were not entirely felicitous; and

g. to change questions which turned out to be problematic. This could be done by e.g. rephrasing them; by giving them another form (e.g. open questions vs. questions with a limited, preset number of answers); or by substituting them with other questions; or by suppressing or supplementing them.

h. Eventually, to check out the revised questionnaire in more countries and cultures.

By and large, then, the guiding principle is what the readers say rather than our preconceptions, and in this iterative process we move from rough drafts to gradually more refined and clear questions.

The procedure is painstaking and time-consuming: in the initial stages - like the one we are dealing with here - we are not trying to get any factual information on the potential groups of readers. We focus on the readers' information and comments on the questions posed. In the end, we are therefore passably confident of knowing how the readers understand the questions, and of not misinterpreting the information they proffer.

Despite these precautions, we are, nevertheless, not dealing with the "same" informations cross-culturally and cross-linguistically. There must, inevitably, be differences in terms of the languages involved, and the ways they are decoded by different readers, as well as in the societies on which the questions also reflect. In Paper 4 we discussed the question of "sameness" in different languages and cultures, and pointed out that claims to absolute "identity" are preposterous. On the other hand, studies of the type we are dealing with here - indeed, any cross-cultural communication - cannot take place without some degree of uncertainty, some degree of inherent difference.

III.0 THE ACTUAL PROCEDURE FOR THE MAKING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

III.I PREVIOUS STUDIES.

The procedure of moving from drafts to the final questionnaire by means of experiments has always been followed in our studies in reader response. In all cases, the directors of the studies have first tentatively phrased some questions. They have then been tested in interviews or in writing with individual participants. Comments - and additional information - have been heeded, and sometimes the comments of only one reader result in changes. Gradually, as the questions have been supplemented by new ones, and they have become more and more unambiguous, each version of the questionnaire has been tested with more and more readers.

The procedure was first used in reader response studies in Denmark in 1968 in the "Tension study". The study comprised qualitative interviews with a total of 42 readers aged from 17 to 46. The first 18 readers were asked about their age and backgrounds by the interviewers. A first draft filled in by readers was then made, and it was revised twice with the last 24 readers whose filling in was observed and whose comments were noted. (A Survey contains a detailed description of these Danish studies).

A shortened version of the "Tension" questionnaire served as the starting point for a very brief questionnaire on age, place of upbringing, and reading habits in the first major study, "Ram 1" (1970-71) in which nearly 800 Danish students participated.

Our experiences led to the development of another questionnaire for the PIF-project (A Project In the Teaching of English in Denmark) headed by the late Dr. Claus Færch. The field work was conducted by Annette Hemstra, under our supervision. The construction lasted from 1976 to '78, it ran through 10 different versions, including five empirical test rounds, involving more than 50 participants from the target groups. The questionnaire covered all aspects pertinent to learners of English as a Foreign Language.

In the "Sprogtest" programme, an anonymous and voluntary test of freshman undergraduates' comprehension of reading English texts, we conducted a study of the factors, notably reading, which might affect comprehension of English texts. In this study, the field work was in the hands of Birte Kristensen. The 15 questions (79 items) were checked out in five versions.

Finally, in the period 1980-82, a questionnaire was constructed in Denmark for the Dano-Turkish "Fairytale" project. The preliminary form of the questionnaire was revised 9 times. In the first four rounds, we pooled our experiences from previous Danish studies and then undertook 4 minor experiment with a total of 16 students. After we felt all bugs had been removed, the questionnaire was tested under field conditions in April 1981 with 74 students.

Perhaps we should stress that in many cases there are only minor changes between different versions: in order to keep track of the development, any corrected misprint has been listed as a

new version, and similarly, every change of only one question has always meant that we have "a new version". In some of our studies the differences between our first and last version have actually been small.

III.2 THE MAKING OF THE FIRST VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR "FOLKTALE".

According to the plan, the background questionnaire for the Folktale-project was to give a fairly comprehensive and detailed picture of the reader's age, educational, parental, social and cultural background with special emphasis on reading habits.

The original planning for "Folktale" took place in 1983-84. At the same time we were setting up the less ambitous "Ram Study". The latter study was to be conducted with only one story (the eponymous story by the Danish writer Cecil Bødker (1961)), and was to take place in Denmark and the US. This being the case, we decided to construct and use the same question for the first major field test in both studies, so that we could use the information for either.

III.3 THE FIRST TEST ROUND.

The questionnaire tested was then, "the same" (version 1) in Denmark and in the US (dated October 84 and March 85, respectively).

In Denmark it was tested out with the attitude questionnaire and the questionnaire for the reading comprehension programme mentioned above, on 6 March 1985 at Taarnby Gymnasium (a suburb of Copenhagen). I b (a modern language class) 2 a (modern languages) and 1 w (natural science line) participated, and a total of 57 students filled in the Danish version of the

questionnaire. The instruction was the same as in English (see the Appendix). The study was conducted by Birte Kristensen, Cay Dollerup (CD), and David S. Miller. After the data collection, the students were given a brief description of the studies which the questionnaires were meant for.

In the US, the study was conducted by David S. Miller. With the kindly permission of Professor Florey Pirini, Head of the English Department, and Dr. Jaspar Endakatchen, two twelfth grade classes at Teaneck High School, New Jersey, participated in the study. The English questionnaire was filled in by 45 students.

After the filling in, the American participants were given a three-page description of the Folktale-project and of the "Ram Study".

In both countries the students were asked to fill in the questionnaire they had received and to underline or otherwise to call attention to clumsy and ambiguous phrasing. The instruction is reprinted at the beginning of the Appendix (p.36-37 below).

IV.0 THE QUESTIONS, WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE TEST AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGES MADE.

IV.I INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS.

Since we aimed at comprehensivenes from the beginning, the questionnaire takes into account numerous features which have surfaced in discussions, or in research, as pertinent to the experience of literature.

There is, accordingly, no point in discussing the whys and wherefores of each question.

Furthermore, once we have posed a question, we rely primarily on our readers, on those who have actually filled in the questionnaries, rather than on "bright ideas", including our own.

In addition, we are aware of the difficulties in getting the "same" or comparable information in different countries. In several cases, we conclude that open questions will yield the most reliable information.

It should be kept in mind that with "homogeneous" groups,

i.e. groups like the student groups who filled in the questionnaires in this part of the study, the answers to some questions will be blinded or overridden by the "group description".

And, finally, it must not be forgotten by that whatever criticism we drew from our readers, we actively called for it asking them to look out for ambiguities and clumsy phrasing.

IV.2 THE ANALYSIS OF THE ANSWERS.

The analysis of the questions focussed almost exclusively on the comments the students had made on individual questions, and on whether they had filled in the questions correctly (if not, this was noted). Conversely, we were not interested in making statistics, and therefore we have rarely bothered much about the actual information proffered.

The questionnaires, both from Denmark and from the US, were first subjected to a preliminary analysis, and some of the more obvious problems surfacing in the American answers were discussed at a meeting on 18 April 1985 with David Miller and Andrew Gordon (University of Florida).

A more detailed and systematic examination of both the Danish and the American versions was undertaken by CD and Chris Tinson (CT). A "master" was made: at each question in the questionnaire, it was indicated which students had registered disaffection with it, and what they had written. These "masters" were then used in our subsequent work; each question was discussed and re-examined with special reference to the students' answers and the aims of the project. I.e. if readers had no problems with a question, we would more often than not leave it as it was, unless we could foresee trouble in other cultures. If, on the other hand, students had indicated that they found a question ambiguous, hard to answer etc. the question was given special examination, and usually changed or rephrased.

V.0 THE QUESTIONS IN VERSION 1, THE ANSWERS AND THE CHANGES FOR VERSION 3.

From the above superscription it might seem as if we have suppressed a version. Version 2, however, is one where there were only lines at questions 1 and 18-21 (version 3 has boxes). This intermediate step is disregarded.

We sometimes refer to specific answers. The filled-in questionnaires were numbered 1-57 in Denmark, and 1-45 in the US. The abbreviations used are M (=male); F (female); Dk (=Danish=from Taarnby Gymnasium); and US (=American=from Teaneck High School).

The full questionnaire is given on the all even pages in the Appendix (version 1 and version 3).

QUESTION 1: AGE

1. Write your age: _1_ years old

The lay-out in the Danish version was a box, a relic from earlier studies where we used punchcards (the same lay-out was used in other questions meant for filling-in, e.g. 18, 19, 20 etc).

1 Skriv din alder: [1] år

The difference in layout was due to a misunderstanding in the last proofreading.

In both Dk and US, a few readers used the dividing line as a comma which had been printed for their convenience. This was particularly evident with other questions with the same old-fashioned layout. Thus 25F Dk reported that she saw television for "0,5 hours a week" and 29 FUs reported that on an average she would read for "9,6 hours a week".

The layout was changed in all these questions, so that the dividing line was placed on the top of the box and allowed for no

QUESTION 2. THE READER'S SEX.

2. What is your sex (check box): male ☐ 1
female ☐ 2

No problems. The question remained unchanged.

QUESTION 3: OWN AND PARENTAL NATIONALITY.

The question was phrased differently in Danish and English to tally with Danish and American nationality, respectively. The question about nationality is, of course crucial to a study like "Folktale", which explores cross-cultural dissimilarities in the response to literature.

It is necessary to be sure that we are dealing with genuinely "culturally different" readers.

In the US, the questions look as follows:

3. a. Are you an American citizen?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 Write your nationality: _____

b. Have you previously been the citizen of another country?

Yes ☐ 1 Write which country: _____
No ☐ 2

c. Was your father born an American citizen?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 Write his nationality: _____
Don´t know ☐ 3

d. Was your mother born an American citizen?

(Ctd...)

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 Write her nationality: _____
Don't know ☐ 3

At 3a. 6 of the 57 Danes and 9 of the 45 Americans checked at "yes", then to add "dansk" (i.e. Dane) or "American", respectively.

We concluded that such "erroneous filling-in" would not yield wrong information, so the question was preserved. In order to make for fewer mistakes of this type, however, we inserted an "if no" before the specification.

This was also done with all other questions of this type, including 3b-d.

3c and 3d presented no problem for Danes, but some American students responded by informing us about their family's country/countries of origin, sometimes reaching back over several generations. Since "Folktale" was to take place in countries with fewer immigrants, we decided to retain the questions.

QUESTION 4: RELIGION.

4. a. What is your religion or creed? _____

None ☐

b. How often do you attend religious services?

Daily ..... ☐ 1
A couple of times a week ..... ☐ 2
Approximately once a week .... ☐ 3
A couple of times a month .... ☐ 4
Approximately once a month ... ☐ 5
A couple of times a year ..... ☐ 6
Rarely ..... ☐ 7
Never ..... ☐ 8

4a was designed for filling in.

The actual breakdown must depend on the readers that eventually participate in "Folktale". At present it is hard to decide whether we shall bracket readers as e.g. Muslims and

Christians, or if we can go further down into different groupings, e.g Mormons, Baptists etc.

The actual breakdown must be decided from a manual examination of the questionnaires in the study.

There were no problems with the question about religious attendance.

QUESTION 5: THE READER'S OCCUPATION:

5. Are you now (check box)

a. receiving an education ☐ Write which: _____

_____

b. retired ☐ What was your previous occupation: _____

_____

c. out of work ☐ What was your last job: _____

_____

d. working at home ☐ What is your present occupation: ___

_____

e. working outside the home ☐ What is your present occupation: _____

The lay-out was not felicitous.

In this particular case, it should be remembered that we hope to reach other groups than students in "Folktale"; if so, this information is relevant. In the present test, all 102 participants checked that they were receiving an education, but 10 Americans informed us about the part-time job they had (including "none", (27 F US)) at 5a.

Furthermore about 5 Danes and more than a third of the Americans listed their part-time jobs at d. or e. Following our exhortation to criticise our work, e.g. 30M Dk commented:"poorly phrased - many of us have part-time jobs, so it is hard to see what you mean".

However, such answers will be blinded with students by a "group description", so there is no real problem.
To make for more clarity the questions were changed as follows in the layout:

6. What is your present position?

a. Student ..... ☐ 1 Please specify: _____

_____

b. Jobless ..... ☐ 2 State your last occupation:

_____

c. Working at home .. ☐ 3 State your present occupation:

_____

d. In work ..... ☐ 4 State your present occupation:

_____

e. Retired ..... ☐ 5 State your previous occupation:

_____

QUESTIONS 6-8 THE READER'S OWN EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.

The phrasing in the questions was geared specifically towards Danes and Americans, respectively:

6. How many years have you gone to school (including kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, and/or high school, etc.)? **Note.** Include present year if you are still a student.

   Total years: __1__

7. Have you completed your primary and/or secondary education (in other words elementary school and/or junior high school and/or high school, etc.)?

   No ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**
   Yes ☐ 2 Continue with question 8

8. a. Are you presently receiving or have you received a college or other type of post-high school education?

   No ☐ **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**

   Yes ☐ Write education(s): _____

   _____

   b. How many years did it take/has been taking until now?

   Number of years: __1__

In isolation the questions appeared to be unproblematic to readers, but the combination caused some confusion.

At question 7, more than 10 readers in the sample indicated they had finished school, which was blatantly incorrect. We concluded that we needed a rough estimate only, as the educational systems differ so much worldwise. Accordingly, the questions were reduced to the following two ones:

7. How many years have you gone to school (Including:- nursery school, elementary school, middle school, college, university etc.)?
   Note. Include present year if you are still a student.

   Total number of years: _____

8. Are you presently receiving - or have you received - a college, university or other type of higher education?

   No ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**

   Yes ☐ 2 Please specify: _____

   _____

QUESTION 9: THE READER'S OWN FINANCIAL POSITION.

9. How would you characterize **YOUR OWN** economic position compared to the average American's?

Much above average	☐ 1
Somewhat above average	☐ 2
Average	☐ 3
Somewhat below average	☐ 4
Much below average	☐ 5

In many cases the answers will be based on highly subjective assessments. Students will, however, be bracketed according to their assessments' of their parents' incomes. So it is not really a problem that some interpreted the question as one about their weekly allowance or pocket money.

The question was retained as relevant with participants who were no longer students. It was rephrased slightly to make it more evident that we wanted readers to bracket themselves in their national contexts.

QUESTIONS 10-11: PLACE OF UPBRINGING:

10. Where did you grow up?

In this country	☐ 1	
In a foreign country	☐ 2	Write where: _____
Both here and a foreign country	☐ 3	Write where: _____

11. Where have you spent **most** of your childhood and youth? (Check **ONE** box only.)

a.	City with over 1 million inhabitants	☐ 1
b.	City with 100,000 - 1 million inhabitants	☐ 2
c.	City or town with 50,000 - 100,000 inhabitants ...	☐ 3
d.	City or town with 10,000 - 50,000 inhabitants	☐ 4
e.	Town with 1,000 - 10,000 inhabitants	☐ 5
f.	Town or village with under 1,000 inhabitants	☐ 6
g.	Rural area	☐ 7

Question 10 presented no problems. And question 11 was also preserved without changes, although both some Danes and some Americans had clearly considered the townships they lived in as towns in their own right and not as a suburb of a major city (Copenhagen and New York, respectively).

Such answers can be overridden by a "group description" with students, and they can minimised by telling readers in the oral instruction before they start the study that the place where they live is a suburb (a procedure we have used in another study (Ram 2)). We cannot, however, totally leave out the possibility that a reader's own perception of the community in which (s)he lives is important. The question may therefore deserve some attention.

QUESTION 12: PARENTAL EDUCATIONS AND OCCUPATIONS.

12. Your parents´ education and occupations:

a. How many years has **your father** gone to public and/or private school (for instance elementary school, junior high school and/or high school and the like)?

Approximate number of years: ___

b. What education did **your father** receive after graduating or leaving public or private school?

None ..... ☐ 1

Theoretical/academic .... ☐ 2 Write which: _____

Practical/skilled trade . ☐ 3 Write which: _____

Other ..... ☐ 4 Write which: _____

Don´t know ..... ☐ 5

c. Write **your father´s** occupation: _____

_____ Don´t know ☐

d. How many years has **your mother** gone to public and/or private school (for instance elementary school, junior high school and/or high school and the like)?

Approximate number of years: __1__

e. What education did **your mother** receive after graduating or leaving public or private school?

None .....☐ 1

Theoretical/academic ....☐ 2 Write which: _____

Practical/skilled trade .☐ 3 Write which: _____

Other .....☐ 4 Write which: _____

Don´t know .....☐ 5

f. Write **your mother´s** occupation: _____

_____ Don´t know ☐

12a and c made some readers include university education, so that we got more years than could possibly have been spent in "traditional school". The record was 26 years.
At 12b and e, some readers had checked two boxes, notably the combination "housewife" and some specified educational background. We decided to keep the phenomenon in mind as potentially interesting.

Apart from this, the lay-out was changed to make the questions clearer.

Both parental and own jobs/trades will be classified according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

QUESTION 13: FAMILY HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.

13. Is there anyone in your immediate family other than yourself who is particularly interested in any of the following things in their spare time? (You may check off as many boxes as necessary).

a.	handicrafts, manual work, etc.	☐	1
b.	family life	☐	2
c.	spending time with close friends	☐	3
d.	parties, get togethers, etc.	☐	4
e.	politics, social concerns, etc.	☐	5
f.	sports	☐	6
g.	dance	☐	7
h.	technology, mechanics, etc.	☐	8
i.	natural sciences, etc.	☐	9
j.	philosophy	☐	10
k.	religion	☐	11
l.	music	☐	12
m.	art, painting, etc.	☐	13
n.	theater, ballet, opera, etc.	☐	14
o.	movies	☐	15
p.	literature	☐	16
q.	television	☐	17
r.	nature	☐	18

s. Other __ Write what: 1. _____

2. _____

The question had presented no problems, but we were not entirely convinced ourselves that it was worth retaining. We did so only after some discussion.

Two Danes and two Americans had listed "travels/traveling", and this hobby was therefore included in the list. Other suggestions, such as "art shows" (2F US) and, "Flying aeroplanes" (37 US) were listed by single individuals only and were therefore not included.

QUESTION 14: PARENTAL FINANCIAL POSITION.

14. How would you characterize your parents' economic background and position compared to the national average.

Much above average	☐	1
Somewhat above average ..	☐	2
Average	☐	3
Somewhat below average ..	☐	4
Much below average	☐	5

The answers presented no problem. We have noted above that the question can be used only as an approximation and a pointer. 31F US was also aware of this: "I don't know - what's the average..."

QUESTION 15: BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

15. a. Are you a single child? Yes ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 16**
No ☐ 2 Continue this question

b. How many children are/were you: __,__ children

c. Which number child are/were you? Number __,__

Except for 38M Dk who had a twin and 20F Dk who mentioned that she had a half-sister, readers had no problems in answering the question. The surprise is, of course, that despite divorces and the like, modern children in the Western world apparently do not find it hard to establish a family hierarchy and family relationships.

We did, nevertheless, change the question, to avoid the somewhat clumsy phrasing which was meant to cover all eventualities:

16. a. Are you a single child?

Yes ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 17**
No ☐ 2 Continue this question

b. Are you:
the eldest child ..... ☐ 1
the youngest child .... ☐ 2
in between ..... ☐ 3

QUESTION 16a: MOTHER TONGUE.

16. a. What is your mother tongue?

English ☐ 1
Spanish ☐ 2
Other ☐ 3 Write which: _____

This question was simplified, so that we counted only Danish and English as mother tongues and asked the readers if their mother tongue was another one (as the Danish is the second language with e.g. Greenlanders, and English with some nationalities outside the US and Great Britain).
The new version looks as follows:

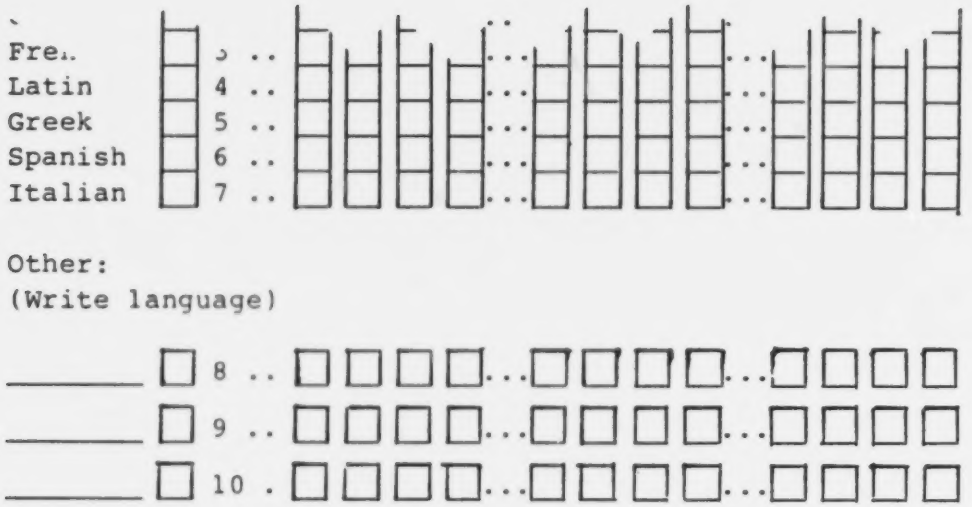
17. a. What is your mother tongue?

English ☐ 1
Other ☐ 2 Please specify: _____

QUESTION 16b: KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER LANGUAGES.

b. How well do you know other languages? (Check appropriate boxes and answer columns A, B & C.)

		A. Writing				B. Reading				C. Speaking			
		w e l l	f a i r	p o o r	n o t	w e l l	f a i r	p o o r	n o t	w e l l	f a i r	p o o r	n o t
English	1	.	.	.	a	.	.	.	a	.	.	.	a
German	2	.	.	.	t	.	.	.	t	.	.	.	t
Dutch	3	.	.	.		.	.	.		.	.	.	
French	4	.	.	.	a	.	.	.	a	.	.	.	a
Spanish	5	.	.	.	l	.	.	.	l	.	.	.	l
Italian	6	.	.	.	l	.	.	.	l	.	.	.	l
Other	7	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.



There were no misunderstandings among the readers, except perhaps, that they did not check at languages they did not know.

The question was originally developed to check mostly on Danes; for Folktale purposes, we have chosen to rephrase it, so that readers themselves indicate what languages they read well. The latter point because in this project we are concerned with reading - in itself an unambiguous activity. The question is prompted by the claim that "musical and linguistic capabilities" tie up with aestheic appreciation.

The new version of the question looks as follows:

b. How well do you READ other languages?

Language:	well	fairly	poorly
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐

QUESTION 17: THE READER'S OWN HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.

17. How would you characterize your own interest in the following things? (Answer all items)

		NONE	SOME	LARGE
a.	handicrafts	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
b.	garden work, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
c.	practical or manual work, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
d.	family life	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
e.	conversation with good friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
f.	parties, get togethers, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
g.	politics, social concerns, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
h.	participating in sports	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
i.	watching sports	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
j.	dancing, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
k.	knitting, sewing, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
l.	nature, hiking, fishing, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
m.	technology, mechanics, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
n.	natural sciences, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
o.	philosophy	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
p.	religion	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
q.	playing music	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
r.	listening to music	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
s.	art, painting, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
t.	theater, ballet, opera, etc.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
u.	literature	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
v.	movies	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

x. Other ☐ Write what: 1. _____

2. _____

In the main the question follows that on family hobbies, but takes into account varying degrees of interest. In itself, the question posed no problems with readers.

Five readers referred to travels, and accordingly, "travels" was added. Other interests, such as "skiing" (7M US); "Following the Grateful Dead" (15M US); and "Hjemmeværnet" (the home guard, the citizens' army) (33M Dk) were mentioned by only one of the more than one hundred participants; since they did not seem to be popular, these thing were disregarded. Yet, the fact is that new fads or developments add to the list e.g. personal computers. Nevertheless, we decided to stop at this point.

QUESTION 18-21: NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT ON SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES IN A WEEK.

18. Approximately how many hours a week do you watch television and/or video?

Approximately __,__ hours

What do you like watching most on television and/or video?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

19. How much time do you spend participating in sports each week?

Approximately __,__ hours

20. How much time do you spend watching sports each week?

Approximately __,__ hours

21. How much time do you spend reading each week (newspapers, magazines, books)?

Approximately __,__ hours

The lay-out was changed a bit to follow question 1; in addition, we added, or rather singled out, video-games from television viewing.

The open questions about television programmes which the readers like were preserved because readers are, clearly, pleased to proffer this information.

In the filling in of some activities, one or two participants were vague: 13F US participated in sports for 10-15 hours a week; conversely, 42F US watched sports for 1/2 hour a week.

20F Dk asked if question 21 included school work and home assignments; we decided explicitly to include this in the question to avoid any doubt and since we were studying reading in general.

It can be mentioned in passing that the answers to the questions showed considerable variation with more diversification among Americans than Danes.

The extremes given were as follows:
Television: 0 to 100 hours.
Sports participation: 0 to 40 hours.
Watching sports: 0 to 10 hours.
Reading: 0 to 96 hours.

QUESTION 22: NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE READER'S HOME.

22. Approximately how many books are there in your home? (There are roughly 50 books per yard in a bookcase.)

0	☐	1
1-5	☐	2
6-9	☐	3
10-29	☐	4
30-49	☐	5
50-99	☐	6
100-249	☐	7
250-499	☐	8
over 500	☐	9

The question irritated a few readers, but was not difficult to answer. We decided to retain it at the present stage.

QUESTION 23: THE READER'S FAVOURITE LITERATURE.

23. What do you particularly like to read? (You may check off as many boxes as necessary)

Nothing at all: ☐ **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 24**

a.	newspapers	☐ 1
b.	magazines	☐ 2
c.	comic books	☐ 3
d.	photo serials	☐ 4
e.	novels and short stories	☐ 5
f.	plays	☐ 6
g.	poetry	☐ 7
h.	books and articles for work	☐ 8
i.	other professional literature	☐ 9
j.	popular science	☐ 10
k.	hobby books	☐ 11
l.	biographies	☐ 12
m.	history	☐ 13
n.	politics, social concerns, etc. ...	☐ 14
o.	religious books	☐ 15
p.	folk tales, fairy tales, etc.	☐ 16
q.	philosophy	☐ 17
r.	detective stories and novels	☐ 18
s.	science fiction	☐ 19
t.	satire	☐ 20

u. Other ☐ Write what: 1. _____

2. _____

We registered no problems in answering the question: additional suggestions were made by only one reader. So the question was retained without supplementation.

QUESTION 24: READING AS A PART OF THE READER'S WORK.

24. Does your work or education (for instance school work or college) require that you read books?

No ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 26**
Yes ☐ 2 Continue with question 25

There was one reader who had got the question wrong. The question was rephrased slightly, but there will probably

some few readers who get it wrong, anyway. On the other hand, the question has been one of our staples in previous studies and thus serves as a useful yardstick.

QUESTIONS 25-26: AMOUNT OF READING PER YEAR

25. a. Approximately how many non-fiction books (for example professional literature, biographies, travel books, etc., including essay collections) have you read **for school or as a part of your work** within the past year?

0	1
1-2	2
3-9	3
10-19	4
20-29	5
30-49	6
over 50	7

b. Approximately how many fiction books (for example novels, poetry and short story collections, detective stories, etc.) have you read **for school or as a part of your work** within the past year?

0	1
1-2	2
3-9	3
10-19	4
20-29	5
30-49	6
over 50	7

26. a. Approximately how many non-fiction books (for example professional literature, biographies, travel books, etc.) have you read **in your spare time for your own enjoyment** within the past year?

0	1
1-2	2
3-9	3
10-19	4
20-29	5
30-49	6
over 50	7

b. Approximately how many fiction books (for example novels, poetry and short story collections, detective stories, etc.) have you read **in your spare time for your own enjoyment** within the past year?

0	1
1-2	2
3-9	3
10-19	4
20-29	5
30-49	6
over 50	7

The questions and answers showed no problem, but we did make a slight rephrasing to make for stylistic elegance.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In the international and experimental test round described above, we also tested out a special questionnaire which was to probe the readers' attitudes to specific phenomena. This questionnaire was moved on to the second international test round without any changes to give us more solid information.

Therefore, we have here only described how the traditional questionnaire on background variables fared with 57 Danes and 45 American students in one part of the iterative process of making a reliable questionnaire. As part of this, the readers were asked specifically to criticise the questionnaire; even so, they made fairly few comments. Erroneous filling in and the participants comments formed the basis for our discussions of the questions, some of which have been rephrased. A few have been changed or suplemented - but in the final analysis, the results we get from the next round of international tests will decide the exact form of the questionnaire to be used for "Folktale".

At the stage described above we have not reduced the number of questions. We have aimed primarily at making sure that the questions were - or have become unambiguous; that they have been improved; and yielded information we considered appopriate.

VI. APPENDIX.

In order to document our work, the questionnaires are reprinted on the following pages. The instructions are printed first. The appendix shows version 1 of the questionnaire on the even pages, and version 3 - the one tested internationally in 1985 and '86 - on odd pages. They start on page 38, and on page 39, respectively.

To make for easy reference, version 1 is overlined. As mentioned version 2 (not shown) is one without boxes at questions 18-21 and 1.

APPENDIX TO

PAPER 5

INSTRUCTION TO READERS

IN THE TEST ROUND DESCRIBED IN THIS PAPER p.36
IN THE NEXT TEST ROUND (in Great Britain, India, and Nigeria) p.37

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE READERS' BACKGROUNDS

IN THE TEST ROUND DESCRIBED IN THIS PAPER p.38
(this version is crossed)

FOR THE NEXT TEST ROUND p.39

Folktale 5:36
March 1985

The following is a draft of a questionnaire which we are going to use in an international study of readers' experiences of literature. After class, you will receive a description of the questionnaire in order that you can get an idea of what it is all about.

The questions deal with both your attitudes and background. The order of the questions will not be the same for all of you (we'll explain why in the description after class).

What we need to have at this point is information about the questionnaire itself - not about you, nor readers' experiences, etc. Therefore, we would appreciate your (anonymous) help in identifying all the weaknesses of this questionnaire - simply fill it in and see if it works.

Every time you come upon a question which you for instance consider clumsy, ambiguous or rude, or which you just find difficult to answer for whatever reason, underline the words or question and write **on the questionnaire beside the question** what's wrong with it or what puzzles you about it. We are not geniuses, and we make mistakes - so if you have a better suggestion for a question, we'll certainly take a close look at it.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Cay Dollerup, Iven Reventlow & Carsten Rosenberg Hansen.
Copenhagen, Denmark.

Folktale 5:37

1985/86

Please fill in the following draft of two questionnaires which we are going to use in an international study of readers' experiences of literature. The questions deal both with your attitudes and background.

We wish to point out that these questionnaires were originally made to be used in an investigation in the United States, which will explain why certain points may seem irrelevant to you. However, in spite of this, we would be grateful if you would answer all the questions.

What we are looking for at this point is information about the questionnaires themselves, and not about you or your experience of literature. Therefore, we would appreciate your (anonymous) help in identifying all the weaknesses of the questionnaires - simply fill them in and see if they work.

Every time you come upon a question which you consider, for instance, clumsy, ambiguous, rude or inappropriate, or which you just find difficult to answer for whatever reason, underline the words or question and <u>on the questionnaire beside the question</u> write what is wrong with it or what puzzles you about it. We shall certainly take a close look at your comments and suggestions.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

Cay Dollerup Iven Reventlow

Carsten Rosenberg Hansen Chris Tinson

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. Write your age: __1__ years old

2. What is your sex (check box):
   male ☐ 1
   female ☐ 2

3. a. Are you an American citizen?

   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2 Write your nationality: _____

   b. Have you previously been the citizen of another country?

   Yes ☐ 1 Write which country: _____
   No ☐ 2

   c. Was your father born an American citizen?

   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2 Write his nationality: _____
   Don't know ☐ 3

   d. Was your mother born an American citizen?

   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2 Write her nationality: _____
   Don't know ☐ 3

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Write your age: ☐☐ years

2. What is your sex? (check box): male ☐ 1
female ☐ 2

3. a Are you a citizen?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 If no, write your nationality: _____

b. Have you previously been the citizen of another country?

Yes ☐ 1 If yes, write which country: _____
No ☐ 2

4. a Was your father born a citizen?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 If no, write his nationality: _____
Don't know ☐ 3

b. Was your mother born a citizen?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 If no, write her nationality: _____
Don't know ☐ 3

4. a. What is your religion or creed? _____

None ☐

b. How often do you attend religious services?

Daily	☐	1
A couple of times a week	☐	2
Approximately once a week	☐	3
A couple of times a month	☐	4
Approximately once a month ...	☐	5
A couple of times a year	☐	6
Rarely	☐	7
Never	☐	8

5. Are you now (check box)

a. receiving an education ☐ Write which: _____

_____

b. retired ☐ What was your previous occupation: _____

_____

c. out of work ☐ What was your last job: _____

_____

d. working at home ☐ What is your present occupation: ___

_____

e. working outside the home ☐ What is your present occupation: _____

5. a. What is your religion or creed? _____

None ☐

b. How often do you attend religious services?

Daily	☐ 1
A couple of times a week	☐ 2
Approximately once a week	☐ 3
A couple of times a month	☐ 4
Approximately once a month	☐ 5
A couple of times a year	☐ 6
Rarely	☐ 7
Never	☐ 8

6. What is your present position?

a. Student ..... ☐ 1 Please specify: _____
_____

b. Jobless ..... ☐ 2 State your last occupation:
_____

c. Working at home .. ☐ 3 State your present occupation:
_____

d. In work ..... ☐ 4 State your present occupation:
_____

e. Retired ..... ☐ 5 State your previous occupation:
_____

6. How many years have you gone to school (including kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, and/or high school, etc.)? **Note.** Include present year if you are still a student.

   Total years: __

7. Have you completed your primary and/or secondary education (in other words elementary school and/or junior high school and/or high school, etc.)?

   No ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**
   Yes ☐ 2 Continue with question 8

8. a. Are you presently receiving or have you received a college or other type of post-high school education?

   No ☐ **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**

   Yes ☐ Write education(s): _____

   _____

   b. How many years did it take/has been taking until now?

   Number of years: __

9. How would you characterize **YOUR OWN** economic position compared to the average American's?

   Much above average ☐ 1
   Somewhat above average ☐ 2
   Average ☐ 3
   Somewhat below average ☐ 4
   Much below average ☐ 5

7. How many years have you gone to school (Including:- nursery school, elementary school, middle school, college, university etc.)?
Note. Include present year if you are still a student.

Total number of years: _____

8. Are you presently receiving - or have you received - a college, university or other type of higher education?

No ☐ 1 **MOVE ON TO QUESTION 9**

Yes ☐ 2 Please specify: _____

_____

9. How would you characterize **YOUR OWN** economic position compared to the national average?

Much above average	☐ 1
Somewhat above average	☐ 2
Average	☐ 3
Somewhat below average	☐ 4
Much below average	☐ 5

10. Where did you grow up?

In this country ..... ☐ 1
In a foreign country .... ☐ 2 Write where: _____
Both here and a
foreign country ..... ☐ 3 Write where: _____

11. Where have you spent **most** of your childhood and youth? (Check **ONE** box only.)

a. City with over 1 million inhabitants ..... ☐ 1
b. City with 100,000 - 1 million inhabitants ..... ☐ 2
c. City or town with 50,000 - 100,000 inhabitants ... ☐ 3
d. City or town with 10,000 - 50,000 inhabitants .... ☐ 4
e. Town with 1,000 - 10,000 inhabitants ..... ☐ 5
f. Town or village with under 1,000 inhabitants ..... ☐ 6
g. Rural area ..... ☐ 7

w. 3 p. 3 (ctd.)

10. Where did you grow up?

In this country ..... ☐ 1
In a foreign country .... ☐ 2 Write where: _____
Both here and in
a foreign country ..... ☐ 3 Write where: _____

11. Where have you spent **most** of your childhood and youth? (Check **ONE** box only.)

a. City with over 1 million inhabitants ..... ☐ 1
b. City with 100,000 - 1 million inhabitants ..... ☐ 2
c. City or town with 50,000 - 100,000 inhabitants ... ☐ 3
d. City or town with 10,000 - 50,000 inhabitants .... ☐ 4
e. Town with 1,000 - 10,000 inhabitants ..... ☐ 5
f. Town or village with under 1,000 inhabitants ..... ☐ 6
g. Rural area ..... ☐ 7

12. Your parents' education and occupations:

a. How many years has **your father** gone to public and/or private school (for instance elementary school, junior high school and/or high school and the like)?

Approximate number of years: ___

b. What education did **your father** receive after graduating or leaving public or private school?

None ..... ☐ 1

Theoretical/academic .... ☐ 2 Write which: _____

Practical/skilled trade . ☐ 3 Write which: _____

Other ..... ☐ 4 Write which: _____

Don't know ..... ☐ 5

c. Write **your father's** occupation: _____

_____ Don't know ☐

d. How many years has **your mother** gone to public and/or private school (for instance elementary school, junior high school and/or high school and the like)?

Approximate number of years: ___

e. What education did **your mother** receive after graduating or leaving public or private school?

None ..... ☐ 1

Theoretical/academic .... ☐ 2 Write which: _____

Practical/skilled trade . ☐ 3 Write which: _____

Other ..... ☐ 4 Write which: _____

Don't know ..... ☐ 5

12. **Your parents' education and occupations:**

a. How many years did **your father** attend school (elementary school, middle school, high school and the like)?

Approximate number of years: _____

b. What education did **your father** receive after secondary school, high school and the like?

None ..... ☐ 1
Theoretical/academic ..... ☐ 2 Specify: _____
Practical/skilled trade .. ☐ 3 Specify: _____
Other ..... ☐ 4 Specify: _____
Don't know ..... ☐ 5

c. Write **your father's** occupation: _____

_____: Don't know ☐

13. a. How many years did **your mother** attend school (elementary school, middle school, high school and the like?

Approximate number of years: _____

b. What education did **your mother** receive after secondary school, high school and the like?

None ..... ☐ 1
Theoretical/academic ..... ☐ 2 Specify: _____
Practical/skilled trade .. ☐ 3 Specify: _____
Other ..... ☐ 4 Specify: _____
Don't know ..... ☐ 5

c. Write **your mother's** occupation: _____

_____: Don't know ☐